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POPULATION DISPLACEMENT OF BELGIUM

31 October 1943

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POPULATION DISPLACEMENT OF BELGIUM

I. INTRODUCTION

Belgium, on the eve of the German invasion, had a population of 8,396,000 (excluding Eupen and Malmedy which were later annexed by Germany). This is an estimate of the Belgian Central Statistical Office (31 December 1939), and is based on the census of 1930 as well as on the subsequent very efficient registration of births, deaths, and migrations. 1/

By the fall of 1943 nearly seven hundred thousand persons had left Belgian territory. The half a million Belgian workers in Germany and the German-occupied territories constitute the majority of these. In addition there are the some 70,000 prisoners of war still in German captivity; about 50,000 deported Jews; 50,000 war refugees. Colonists in the East, boys and girls of the Land Service, and Legionnaires together comprised only less than 10,000.

This population loss has only been partly counterbalanced by an influx of some sixty thousand Germans and foreign laborers brought in by the Reich authorities. Thus Belgium has suffered a migratory loss of over six hundred thousand.

According to estimates of the Belgian Central Statistical Office for the end of 1942, the total population of Belgium is 8,238,000. 2/ This would indicate a population decrease of only 158,000. Data on Belgian vital statistics for the years 1940, 1941 and 1942 show that up to the end of 1942, the excess of deaths over births resulted in a population loss of 55,000. The ensuing migratory loss must then be estimated at some one hundred thousand. This estimate is in direct contradiction to the available figures on population movement into and out of Belgium, particularly as these figures do not include Belgian soldiers who were evacuated from Dunkirk. By the end of 1942 some six hundred thousand persons had left Belgium. A migratory loss of only one hundred thousand would mean that there had been an influx of five hundred thousand Germans and foreign laborers. There is no basis for such an assumption.

The only explanation is that the 1942 figures of the Belgian Central Statistical Office refer to the legal population of Belgium, thus including Belgian workers abroad, who are considered as temporarily absent. Assuming that these statistics list as out-migrants prisoners of war, war refugees, and Jews deported by the end of 1942, but exclude the great mass of Belgian workers abroad; and as in-migrants the small section of German civilians who are considered as having accepted permanent residence in Belgium, a migratory loss of only one hundred thousand is self-explanatory.

1/ The Population of Belgium, Census Library Project in cooperation with the Office of Foreign Relief.

2/ Le Soir, 10 May 1943.

Within Belgium itself the most important shift in population has resulted from a movement to the urban centers. Over 250,000 persons have migrated to the four largest cities, particularly to the mining and metallurgical district of Liège.

The following table indicates the displacement of population of Belgium expressed in round numbers:

Out	Into
50,000 war refugees	30,000 foreign prisoners of war and workers
70,000 prisoners of war	
450,000 workers in Greater Germany	20,000-25,000 German officials, foremen, employees, and refugees from bombed areas
50,000 workers in German-occupied countries	
1,000 settlers in the Eastern territories	
2,000 Belgian youth in the Land Service abroad	40,000-50,000 German troops stationed in Belgium
6,000 civilian prisoners abroad	
6,000 Legionnaires on the Eastern front	
45,000-50,000 deported Jews	
680,000 - 685,000	90,000 - 100,000.

II. MOVEMENT OF POPULATION OUT OF BELGIUM

A. War Refugees

Belgium was invaded by the German Army on 10 May 1940. The entire population of many villages and towns fled before the invader. The German break-through to the sea split the mass of refugees into two parts. Those in the north were trapped, and after the surrender of the Belgian Army in June 1940, they returned to their homes. Only a small number succeeded in escaping to England. From Southern Belgium great numbers streamed into France, mingling with the fleeing French population.

The French News Service on 31 May 1940 estimated the number of Belgian refugees at one million. The same figure was given by the American Red Cross.

After the armistice the Belgian refugees were the first to return home. Even the majority of Jewish refugees returned to Belgium, for at that time the German occupation authorities were still courting certain Belgian government circles, and discriminatory measures had not yet been introduced. Belgium's economic situation was also better than that of France, because Germany with an eye to mobilizing Belgium for the Reich's war machine was making every effort to restore normal conditions. On the other hand a considerable number of Jewish refugees were unable to return. These were mainly German Jews who had taken refuge in Belgium, and were on the very day of the German invasion arrested as enemy aliens, and deported to France, where they were interned. On that day the Belgian authorities rounded up some five thousand men between the ages of seventeen and sixty. In June, the French authorities were arresting German Jewish women refugees who had fled to France from Belgium. The total number of Jews from Belgium under internment or compulsory residence in France has been estimated at ten thousand.

A small section of the Belgian refugees succeeded in leaving for America and the Belgian Congo; others remained in the former unoccupied part of France waiting for an opportunity to reach a Spanish or Portuguese port.

Le Soir of 30 - 31 January 1943 in speaking of "tens of thousands of Belgian workers" employed in France, included among them "a considerable number of unrepatriated refugees." This probably refers to Belgians who for one reason or another had been stranded in France.

After November 1942, when Southern France, too, was occupied by the Germans, some Belgian refugees succeeded in crossing the Pyrenees or the Alps and made good their escape to Spain and Switzerland. In Spain many were interned in concentration camps by the authorities. Others with the aid of the British were transferred to North Africa. 1/

1/ Le Soir, 21 May 1943.

According to the Belgian Information Center, Belgian war refugees abroad are distributed as follows: 13,000 1/ in Great Britain; 1,000 in Spain and Portugal; 500 in Switzerland; 2,000 in the Belgian Congo 2/; 600 in the United States; and about 5,000 scattered throughout the rest of the world (including France and South America, where there are a very small number).

However, the above total of 22,000 does not encompass the entire volume of Belgian war refugees. According to the United States immigration statistics, there were 1,171 Belgian quota immigrants in the period between 1 July 1940 and 30 June 1941. 3/ Thus even the figure for Belgian nationals who came into this country is at least twice as high as the number given by the Belgian Information Center. Adding Belgian nationals born out of Belgium, the figure would probably be somewhat higher. It may therefore be assumed that the data of the Belgian Information Center is incomplete for some other countries as well, so that the actual number of civilian Belgians who left their fatherland during the war would substantially exceed 22,000.

Furthermore, the data of the Belgian Information Center does not include Belgian war refugees of non-Belgian nationality. The importance of this category may be seen from the American immigration statistics. The number of Belgian immigrants according to their last residence was 1,816 for the fiscal year 1940-41. To this number must be added 721 non-immigrant aliens whose last residence was Belgium and who were admitted to the United States during this period; and several hundred Belgian war refugees whose last residence had been in France or some other country. Thus the total number of refugees from Belgium is about five times as high as the figure given by the Belgian Information Center. The number of non-Belgian nationals among the war refugees was considerable, consisting mainly of German, Austrian, Czech, and Dutch Jews who had lived in Belgium and fled from the German invasion. Thousands of Jewish and other foreigners who were former residents of Belgium were stranded in France, while others emigrated from France or directly from Belgium to the Western Hemisphere. Thus the total number of war refugees may be estimated at about fifty thousand.

1/ According to the Report Submitted by Sir Herbert Emerson, High Commissioner for Refugees, Geneva, January 1941, the number of Belgian civilians who escaped to England was 15,000.

2/ According to Dr. Paul Brutsaert, Director of Medical Laboratories, Leopoldsville, Belgian Congo, they numbered 1,500 in the spring of 1943.

3/ Annual Report of the Attorney General of the United States For the Fiscal Year Ending 30 June 1941.

B. Prisoners of War

Some 545,000 Belgian soldiers were captured during the brief campaign in the Low Countries. All Flemish soldiers, 1/ as well as many Walloons, were released. Only a part of those captured were detained as prisoners of war and transferred to Germany. Since then, their number has been slowly decreasing. In February 1942, according to a Belgian report, the total number of Belgian officers and soldiers still in German prison camps was eighty thousand. 2/ The American Red Cross figure for August 1942 was 77,000. On 15 February 1943 the Nationalblatt (Luxembourg) announced as "good news" the fact that a considerable number of prisoners of war had returned.

In April 1943, the Belgian press reported that the German Military Administration had drawn up a plan for the transfer of most of the Belgian prisoners of war from the status of captives to that of free workers, thus extending the scheme which had already been applied to 250,000 French prisoners of war in Germany. 3/ Notre Combat, a bi-monthly publication of the Amis du Grand Reich Allemand (AGRA), an organ of the Walloon National Socialist Movement, stated that "the scheme will be an advantage to Germany," because Germany's leaders, "anxious not to neglect any possibility of help, however small, and having requisitioned all available workers in the occupied countries, have now turned to the prisoners. They have noted that these ex-soldiers... were willing to do good work; their contribution was useful already, but it would be better still if their conditions were improved. Indeed, any captivity, however mild, is bound to lead to a feeling of inferiority and to lower the morale of the strongest person. Liberated prisoners can go back to their country on ordinary leave and receive a free man's wages, which is more consistent and dignified than to receive a prisoner's allowance. At the same time the Reich would increase its man-power potential...."

According to the Belgian Information Center this plan has not been carried out to date. In September 1943 the American Red Cross estimated that there were still seventy thousand Belgian prisoners of war in German captivity.

C. Belgian Workers in Germany

1. Recruitment. During the first year of German occupation, the recruitment of Belgian workers for the Reich progressed slowly. According to the Reichsarbeitsblatt of 15 July 1941, the number of Belgian civilians employed in the Reich totaled 87,000 as of 1 April 1941. On 25 September 1941 it had reached 121,500. 4/ Thereafter the tempo of

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1/ Reichsarbeitsblatt, 25 May 1941, No. 15, Part V p. 257.

2/ News from Belgium, 7 March 1942.

3/ Notre Combat, 24 April 1943. Le Pays Réel, 29 April 1943.

4/ Reichsarbeitsblatt, 5 December 1941.

recruitment increased sharply, particularly in connection with the Russian campaign, when the growing demands of the German armament industry placed a premium on skilled labor. By the end of May 1942 the total number of workers recruited for Germany was placed at three hundred thousand. 1/ Allowing for the labor turnover, the number of Belgian civilian workers employed in Germany at the end of May 1942 may be estimated at 215,000. 2/

On 6 March 1942, the German military command introduced the general mobilization of labor. Until the autumn of 1942, however, compulsory labor service was limited to work within Belgium itself. On 6 October 1942 an order extended compulsory labor service to employment outside of Belgium as well. 3/

Announcing that by the Order of 6 October 1942, 110,000 workers had been recruited, Radio Allouis of 4 March 1943 stated that only 15,000 of them had been mobilized under the law and that the great majority had volunteered, thus receiving privileges not granted to conscripted workers. According to this broadcast, in order to forward further recruitment "the various industries, especially the Belgian metallurgical industry, are being combed out carefully to free workers for Germany. About one-third of trade, insurance, and banking workers are being directed into the Belgian metallurgical industry. This affects about 75,000 workers...." Radio Allouis then proceeded to describe the methods used to promote "voluntary" enlistment for labor:

"Belgian handicraft concerns will free many workers for the Reich and the remainder for Belgian armament factories. Only the most vital artisans will continue their trade. The textile industry, too, is being combed out again. As about 5,000 persons will be freed, there will be a considerable reduction in luxury articles. As more than thirty percent of the available labor will go to the Reich, a considerable number of places of entertainment and hotels will be closed down; thus Belgian town life will gradually lose its peace-time aspect. If a night-club closes down, the sandwichboard man also becomes available for more useful work. Every measure to free workers automatically entails further labor saving. This will be the case when all replaceable men aged 21-25 are removed from agriculture....

"... Simultaneously, all Belgian men aged 18-20 with certain exceptions, are being compulsorily directed to work in Germany...."

1/ Voelkischer Beobachter, 6 September 1942.

2/ Kulischer, Eugene M. The Displacement of Population in Europe, Montreal, 1943.

3/ International Labour Review, March 1943, p. 372.

The economic and social complications, resulting from compulsory labor mobilization, forced the German authorities to make certain exceptions with regard to farm labor and women workers.

It was announced early in March 1943 that all replaceable men, aged 21-25, would be removed from agriculture. However, on 31 March 1943 Volk en Staat reported that following upon a request of the Belgian Ministry of Agriculture and Food Supply and the Commission Nationale Alimentaire et Agricole (CNAA), the German authorities had announced:

"Among the members of the agricultural profession, only those persons born in 1922, 1923 and 1924 will be obliged to work in Germany. In addition, Commanders of Oberfeldkommandaturen and the chief Feldkommandaturen (Ghent, Antwerp, Brussels, Liege, Mons) may make exceptions for persons born in 1922, 1923 and 1924 in cases where their conscription would prejudice agricultural efficiency."

Nevertheless, on 23 April 1943, Le Soir complained that certain recruiting offices "fail to conform to this clearly defined promise and are requisitioning men who are really useful to agriculture and who do not belong to the 1922, 1923 or 1924 classes." The paper added:

"We can but deplore this practice. But of course all the CNAA can do is to approach the German authorities and request that the decisions taken by them are properly observed."

The intervention of the Belgian Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare also led to certain limitations in the compulsory mobilization of women. On 10 March 1943 the German Military Administration addressed the following communication to the Belgian Ministry of Labor: "Female workers are not liable to compulsory work in Germany, except in the case of domestic servants and hotel staff, and only in so far as the women concerned were already employed in this capacity in Belgium."

The Bruesseler Zeitung of 28 March 1943 which published this announcement, added:

"No further measures for directing Belgian female labour to Germany are being considered. Moreover, only 241 women have so far been called up for work in Germany, but the number of women going voluntarily to Germany is considerably greater."

This, of course, applied only to conscription for work in Germany. General compulsory labor service for women in Belgium was not suspended. 1/

1/ Le Soir, 27-28 March 1943.

The total number of workers sent to Germany was reported on 4 March 1943 as 436,000. 1/ Two months later Le Nouveau Journal, a German-controlled Belgian publication, stated that more than four hundred thousand Belgian laborers were at that time at work in Germany. 2/ On 23 October 1943 News from Belgium stated that the "number of deportees" (i.e., Belgian workers) in Germany and the German-occupied territories exceeds half a million. Deducting the some fifty thousand workers employed in the German-occupied territories (see page 11) there are about 450,000 Belgian workers in Greater Germany.

2. Ethnic Structure. In March 1943 there were over three hundred thousand Flemish workers in Greater Germany. 3/ They constituted over three quarters of the total number of workers from Belgium. One of the reasons was that the textile industry located in the Flemish area 4/ was drained of all available labor while the Walloon mining and metallurgical districts, were not affected as much by the recruitment of workers. A third important factor was the liberation of all the Flemish prisoners of war, which increased the number of potential volunteers for labor in Germany.

3. Geographical Distribution. Belgian workers are scattered throughout Germany in camps situated far distant from one another. 5/ Groups of Flemish workers who constitute the vast majority of Belgian labor in the Reich, are concentrated in the following localities: Braunschweig (Junker factories), Hanover, Hamburg, Stuttgart, Nuremberg, Vienna, Hirschberg (Schlesische Zellwollfabriken), Berlin, Kiel, Cologne, Jena. 6/

The geographical distribution of the Walloon workers may be gathered from the circuits of the Walloon delegates to the German Labor Front. These circuits are as follows:

(1) Magdeburg - Anhalt, Halle - Merseburg, and Thuringia;

(2) Berlin, Brandenburg and Pomerania;

(3) Bavarian Ostmark, Franconia, Munich - Upper Bavaria, Swabia, Wurtemberg - Hohenzollern;

1/ Radio Allouis, 4 March 1943.

2/ Le Nouveau Journal, 24-26 April 1943.

3/ Vooruit, Ghent, 6 March 1943.

4/ The Population of Belgium, Census Library Project in cooperation with the Office of Foreign Relief.

5/ Le Nouveau Journal, 24-26 April 1943.

6/ Vlaamische Post, Berlin, 22 November 1942, reporting a lecture tour of a Flemish representative.

(4) North Westphalia and Essen;

(5) Cologne - Aachen and Moselland (i.e., Luxembourg);

(6) South and East Hanover. 1/

There has been mention of Belgian workers in the factories of the Duesseldorf area 2/ and in a newly established synthetic silk factory near Krefeld. And, according to Brazzaville, in a French-language broadcast of 10 October 1943:

"The Belgian Agency announces that 30,000 Belgian workers are to be sent by the Germans to the Austro-Italian frontier to work on the construction of fortifications."

4. Occupational Distribution. The German recruitment scheme for Western Europe demands a supply of skilled workers for German industry and in particular for the armament factories. This program has been applied especially to Belgium. According to the International Labour Office, recruited Belgians were almost exclusively industrial workers, and in the main skilled labor. Even among the women, the majority of those who volunteered worked in factories, although some who were sent to the Reich were employed as domestic help. Only women conscripted for labor were exclusively for domestic and hotel service. It has also been reported that thousands of girls of the Flemish Nazi girls' organization, referred to as DMS, are employed on German farms in Lower Saxony.

There have been complaints regarding the use made of Belgian labor since the introduction of compulsory labor service. An indirect corroboration of these complaints appeared in Le Soir of 16 April 1943, which published an interview with "a person of some authority" in Berlin, who insisted that the German forces of occupation "are most anxious to see that each man is given work really suited to his abilities." He stated further, however, that while "the organization was quite satisfactory under the voluntary system, it has been disorganized by the incoming rush of conscripted workers. Their adequate distribution is rendered all the more difficult by the fact that certain trained workers can no longer be used at their own particular kind of work, because the corresponding industries have been eliminated to make room for the production of arms. Thus certain specialized workers must inevitably be employed as ordinary workers in the war industry..."

D. Belgian Workers in German-Occupied Countries

In addition to workers employed in Greater Germany, including the territories incorporated into the Reich, there

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1/ L'Effort Walloon, 10 January 1943. According to Le Nouveau Journal, 24-26 April 1942, there are, apart from a general delegate, nine Walloon delegates in the Reich.

2/ Churchill Gazette, Belgian underground newspaper, February 1943.

are many Belgians employed in other German-occupied areas, particularly in Northern France, Norway, and in the East.

According to the Paris correspondent of Volk en Staat tens of thousands of Belgian workers were laboring in France in January 1943. 1/ Of this number, many are immigrants who came to France before the war. Others, according to the above mentioned source, are unrepatriated refugees of the influx of May 1940. But there are many who came after the German occupation. They are defined as "permuters /commuters/, seasonal workers, and volunteers employed on great works of construction." That they constitute a considerable number may be inferred from a circular of the Belgian Labor Office which lists types of employment that exempt the worker from the labor draft. Among the localities where Belgian laborers are urged to go as volunteers, the circular mentions Northern France, as well as Germany itself and the Belgian coast. 2/ Belgians have also been reported to be employed on construction work in the Channel Islands. 3/

The majority of Belgian workers in Northern France are employed on the construction of the so-called Atlantic Wall and other projects of the Todt Organization (OT). A Nachrichtendienst der Deutschen Zeitungsverleger (NDZ) report of 7 May 1943 lists Belgian workers first among the laborers of fifteen nations employed on the Atlantic Wall. Moreover these Belgian workers are Walloons only, as Flemings are listed separately in fourth place. Some Belgians have also been sent to Southern France for work on the Mediterranean coastal defenses. 4/

France is not the only foreign country in which Belgians are employed by the OT. They are dispersed throughout German-occupied Europe, in areas as remote as the coastal defenses of Crete. 5/ They seem to be playing a prominent role in Norway, often being listed in the reports on OT labor in that country. A report of an individual, who worked for the OT in Norway in June 1943, places the Belgians third, after the conscripted Norwegians and the Poles. 6/

The number of Belgians employed by the OT on the Russian front and elsewhere in the occupied territories of the East is considerable. An appeal to Flemish laborers to enlist for OT service in the East contained the following:

1/ Le Soir, 30-31 January 1943.

2/ According to a private report of July 1942, News Digest, No. 1042, London.

3/ Overseas News Agency, 13 October 1943.

4/ News from Belgium, 16 October 1943.

5/ Le Nouveau Journal, 9 June 1943.

6/ Vecko-Journalen No. 27, June 1943.

"Thousands of your Flemish compatriots are already working in the East.... We have already received hundreds of letters from Flemish workers working with the Todt Organization in the East.... A few days ago, hundreds of OT men came home [from the East] on leave." 1/ Thus it may be inferred that a year ago the total number of Belgians working with the OT in the entire German-occupied Soviet territory amounted to many thousands. On 30 October 1942 Het Laatste Nieuws reported that here were three thousand Flemings working for the OT in the Ukraine alone.

On 15 November 1943 Vooruit wrote:

"This week over 100 Flemish workers left for Russia. Flanders now has over 3,000 workers in the East." This would indicate that the number of Flemish workers in the East has not increased during the past year.

According to information received by the International Labour Office, the number of Belgians working in the German-occupied territories is estimated at fifty thousand. Taking into account the number of Belgians in the Todt Organization itself as well as those Belgian workers in France and in the East, the International Labour Office figure seems to be rather conservative.

E. Colonists in the German-Occupied Eastern Territories

In the summer of 1942, the Germans were reported to be planning the colonization of occupied Soviet territories with persons of Germanic stock. This scheme involved a migration of three million Netherlanders, and attempts were also made to interest the Belgians in the project. On 2 August 1942 Le Pays Réel announced the formation of a Belgian syndicate for labor in the European East. This "Belgo-European Syndicate" 2/ was established with an initial capital of five hundred thousand Belgian francs for research purposes. The immediate practical aim of the Syndicate was proclaimed to be "the formation of a Belgian agricultural colony in the Ukraine," and it was stated that the Syndicate "did not wish to send isolated peasant families there, but to create a regular colony and thus to avoid the risks which might result from the estrangement of our compatriots in these regions." 3/

Commenting on the creation of the "Belgo-European Syndicate" the Belgian periodical Message (London) of December 1942 stated that tens of thousands of Belgian colonists had been sent to the East. This statement is not in agreement with other information. According to available reports, a few hundred Belgians and Netherlanders were sent to the

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1/ Volk en Staat, 15 October 1942.

2/ According to Message, London, December 1942, the name of the Syndicate is Société Belgo-Européenne Agricole, Commerciale et Industrielle.

3/ Le Nouveau Journal, 4 January 1943.

German-occupied Eastern territories during the winter of 1941-42, solely in the capacity of managers of former Soviet collective farms. Of these the majority were Netherlanders. 1/ Nonetheless, the Flemish National Socialists continued to promise that in the matter of settlement of the East, Belgium intended to fulfill its duty to Germany and to Europe. It would send its peasants, technicians, and intellectuals to the East as "proof of our European solidarity, our strength and our aptitudes in this greatest undertaking of all time." They added pointedly, however, that they regarded South and West Wallonia and Northern France as the natural outlet for the expansion of their excess population. 2/ But at the same time there were complaints that even Flemings were not enthusiastic about participating in the colonization of the East. On 30 August 1942 Het Laatste Nieuws wrote:

"Europe is doing everything possible to increase her agricultural production. Why should the Flemings lag behind and take no part in the cultivation of the Ukraine in the service of Europe?"

These appeals have met with little response and on 4 January 1943 Le Nouveau Journal found it necessary to explain that the project of Belgian agricultural colonization of the Ukraine "has not been abandoned, but the Syndicate is taken up today with more immediate tasks. It has to take various initial steps connected with transport, packing, and the hotel trade. The exploitation of the vast riches of these lands necessitates the organization of transport and the setting up of factories to make packing cases and barrels. Plans have already been drawn up with regard to the latter."

This declaration was accompanied by the promise that "next Spring, thanks to the cooperation of a Russian hydrographer exiled in Belgium and of a Belgian water transport expert, it is hoped to send a convoy of barges from Antwerp to the Dnieper, by way of the rivers and canals. These barges will bring back raw materials for our own industries."

For the current year this research bureau has found no data on Belgian colonization in the East. The only indirect reference to this subject is to be gleaned from a circular of a business man who tried to buy up "directly or indirectly, all the available unrationed goods and those which can be bought without special permission." The writer promised a commission for the location of such merchandise, adding that "the information is of very great importance, not only for the present, but for the post-war period, for our firm intends to set up a Flemish colony in the East." 3/

The absence of more specific information is very significant. The Belgian Nazis never neglect an opportunity

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1/ Netherland News, 26 November - 10 December 1941 and 26 January - 10 February 1942.

2/ De Nationaal-Socialist, Ghent, 14 November 1942.

3/ Volk en Staat, 29 January 1943.

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to offer proof of their collaboration with Germany, particularly in the East against the "menace of Bolshevism." All movements of Belgians to the East for service in the Walloon and Flemish Legions, in para-military organizations, and in the OT are scrupulously noted by the press. In regard to agricultural work, there is no information except with reference to boys and girls of the Land Service. From this it may be inferred that the promise to send peasants to the German-occupied Soviet territory was not fulfilled to any considerable degree, neither by Walloons nor by the Flemings. The total number of Belgian peasants attracted to the East by German propaganda, did not exceed one thousand.

A great deal has also been done to induce the Flemish youth to go to the East for agricultural work. The Nationaal Socialistisch Jeugd Verbond (NSJV) Land Service was created in August 1942. Girls and boys between the ages of fourteen and sixteen were incorporated into the Land Service at that time. They were promised that after a training period of four years (and for the boys, after military and labor service) they would each receive a farm in the East, or possibly in the West, without payment. Their number was variously stated as three hundred and six hundred (four hundred boys and two hundred girls). 1/

In May 1943 hundreds of Flemish girls and an undetermined number of boys were reported working in the NSJV Land Service in the Warthegau. 2/ The Vooruit of 9 January 1943 published a list of the camps in which they were quartered. Inasmuch as these camps bear German names, their location is difficult to determine. The table below, based on information supplied to this bureau by the Polish Information Center, represents the best available opinion regarding the original Polish names of the camps.

Vooruit List of Labor Camps	Names as given by the Polish Information Center
Goslowitz	Goslawice
Operow	Oporiw or Oporowo
Siemice	Siennice
Usch	Usza or Uszow
Storchnest	Bocianow or Bocianowo
Niebieze	Dniebieze
Littow	Littow
Muehlendorf	Mlyny
Kamienna	Kamienna
Kamienna Vorwerk	Kamienna Folwark
Zelm	?
Ulmow	?
Schulenau	?
Gersdorf	?
Borbek	?

1/ Vooruit, Ghent, 12 and 19 December 1942. It is not clear whether or not the first group is included within the second.

2/ Vooruit, 9 January 1943. Bruesseler Zeitung, 12 May 1943.

On 13 July 1943 the Nachrichten und Pressedienst reported the establishment of a new training camp in Warthegau, for three thousand Norwegian, Danish, Dutch, and Belgian boys and girls who are later to become farmers in the East. In Eastern Prussia Walloon boys and girls are also reported to be receiving training in the theory and practice of agriculture. 1/

There have been complaints that among the Flemish youth who joined the NSJV Land Service only a few are really of peasant stock. The failure of the recruiting campaign among peasant children was attributed by the controlled press to a number of factors such as: the hostility of the parents toward National-Socialism; their unwillingness to part with the labor of their children, as well as their fear of sending them into unknown adventures; "ignorance" of the objectives of the youth organization; and the influence of the clergy. 2/

Taking into account the failure of the Land Service propaganda among the farmers, and the fact that available reports speak of groups numbering no more than a few hundred, the total of the Belgian youth in the Land Service abroad probably does not exceed two thousand.

F. Civilian Prisoners Abroad

The underground paper La Libre Belgique wrote on 15 January 1943 that "the number of civilian prisoners is now roughly 7,500. For the last few months, the Germans have been sending about three to four thousand of these to Germany every month."

The survey on "The Migratory Movements of the Populations," compiled in February of this year by the Bureau of the Interallied Committee for After-War Requirements, estimates that there are six thousand civilian prisoners in Germany.

G. Belgians in Military and Para-Military Formations

An intensive propaganda campaign was conducted to persuade Belgians to enlist in the military and para-military formations organized by the Flemish and Walloon Nazis. Recruits were told that by enlisting they would not only help to protect Europe from the Bolshevik danger, but would also safeguard the future Belgian colonization of the East. Thus in March 1943 Flemish newspapers published the following appeal under the headline: "Flemish Boys, Conquer Your Land!":

"It has long been proved that the Flemish area is not sufficient to feed our people. There are enormous areas to be cultivated in the East. Flemish farmers' sons and others who long to lead a farmer's life take up a gun in the ranks of the Waffen-SS to change it afterwards for a plough! Join the Flemish Legion!" 3/

1/ Le Pays Réel, 12 June 1943.

2/ De Nationaal-Socialist, Ghent, 16 January 1943.

3/ De National Socialist, Ghent, 20 March 1943.

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In its endeavors to obtain new troops for the Eastern front, Germany has not even spared the contingents of trained Belgian workers employed in the industries of the Reich and occupied territories. A recruiting drive for service on the Eastern front was reported among Belgian workers employed in Germany 1/ and in the OT 2/ in occupied territories. Attempts have even been made to induce Belgian prisoners of war to join the Walloon Legion. 3/

Information on the number of legionnaires is uncertain and contradictory. According to the Belgian Information Center, there are about six hundred men in the Walloon Legion. However, this figure is too small. Scattered information on the subject in the Belgian newspapers presents a quite different picture. La Liega (Liege) reported on 27 April 1943 that "the gaps in the old (Walloon) battalion have been filled, and it will be possible to form a second battalion too. Thus the Walloon Legion will attain the size of a regiment." On 6 May 1943 the Bruesseler Zeitung stated that the Walloon Legion comprised about two thousand men. On 1 August 1943 Victor Matthys, Leon Degrelle's substitute, boasted that there were "a thousand new Walloon recruits in the last few months. Five hundred young Walloons, 200 of whom were workers in Germany, joined the SS Brigade Wallonia in July, while 500 others joined the Walloon Guards and the National Sozialistisches Kraftfaehrer-Korps." 4/ On 12 September he declared that "our Walloon workers in Germany have during the last few weeks given us 1,150 new recruits." 5/

The number of volunteers in the Flemish Legion as stated by the Belgian Information Center is about one thousand. The National Socialist Flemish organ Vooruit on 17 January 1943 spoke of "thousands of Flemings in the East" fighting in the Flemish Waffen-SS.

It is clear that while the Belgian Information Center is inclined to belittle the number of Walloons and Flemings, who are fighting together with the Germans, the National Socialist Flemish and Walloon press seeks to magnify the importance of the respective Legions. The Bruesseler Zeitung of 1 August 1943, despite Victor Matthys' statement of the same day published the following more reliable figure: "In the fourth year of war... 800 men from Flanders and Wallonia and Northern France have volunteered to fight on the Eastern front." Of course, in the foregoing period, directly following the organization of the Legions (November 1941), the number of volunteers was greater.

1/ De Vlaamsche Post, Berlin, 18 October 1942. Het Vlaamsche Land, 19 February 1943. Le Soir, 7 April 1943.

2/ Vecko-Journalen No. 27, June 1943, according to a report of a man who worked for the OT in Norway.

3/ Le Pays Réel, 16 February 1943.

4/ Le Pays Réel, 1 August 1943.

5/ Le Nouveau Journal, 13 September 1943.

(29011)

The total number of Belgians who have joined the two Legions may be estimated at about three thousand, including men receiving military training in German camps 1/ and girls working in the Women's Auxiliary. 2/

H. Deportation of Jews

In 1940 there were in Belgium 85,000 permanent Jewish residents (Belgian citizens and foreigners) and about 25,000 refugees from Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia. The deportation of 5,000 German Jews on 10 May and the subsequent mass flight to France considerably reduced the Jewish population of Belgium (see p.3). Although many Jews returned to their homes after the collapse of France, thousands remained, either voluntarily or under internment, in the French unoccupied zone. By the autumn of 1940, Belgium numbered some 90,000 to 95,000 Jews.

The first anti-Jewish decree in Belgium was enacted on 23 October 1940. Among other restrictions it introduced a separate register for the Jewish population and forbade the return of Jews who had fled the country. On 19 November 1940, a first group of several hundred Jewish aliens, mainly those possessing provisional residence permits, were expelled from Antwerp to various localities in the Hasselt district of Northern Belgium. In February 1941, the German authorities stopped the issuance of exit permits to Jews, thus preventing any legal emigration. At the same time the German-sponsored Flemish nationalists commenced a violent propaganda drive for a "judenrein" Belgium.

Beginning with August 1941 Jews were only permitted to reside in four Belgian cities: Brussels, Antwerp, Liege, and Charleroi, 3/ and were forcibly removed from all other Belgian towns.

This compulsory concentration was a prelude to systematic mass deportations to Germany, Poland or to an "unknown destination." The first victims of these deportations were Jews of foreign nationality living in Belgium. Later, their fate was shared by naturalized and autochthonous Belgian Jews. Thousands of Jews were rounded up in the streets of Antwerp and Brussels and sent to a sorting camp in Malines, pending deportation. A part of them were sent to Boulogne, Calais and other French coastal points to work on fortifications. 4/ Other transports were directed to the Reich where they were put to work repairing the damages to German cities devastated by the Allied air raids. 5/ The majority were, however, deported eastwards.

1/ According to De Vlaamsche Post, Berlin, 22 November 1943, one of these camps is located in Graz. Le Nouveau Journal, 23 April 1943 reports a Hitler youth Wehrsport camp for both Flemings and Walloons, in Carinthia.

2/ Vooruit, 11 August 1942.

3/ News from Belgium, 10 July 1943.

4/ The Contemporary Jewish Record, December 1942.

5/ World Jewish Congress. Confidential report received from its Geneva Office, 29 August 1942.

(29011)

In March 1942, several reports from Poland referred to a transport numbering ten thousand Belgian Jews, which had arrived in Lodz. They were put to work in textile factories turning out uniforms for the German Army. 1/ Later, there were reports that among the victims of massacres in the Baltic States, were hundreds of deported Belgian Jews.

In August, the arrival in Cracow of freight trains each carrying between 600 and 1,850 Jews from Brussels and Antwerp was reported. 2/ Jews from Limburg were shipped to the German-occupied Ukraine. Several hundred Belgian Jews, including women between the ages of sixteen and fifty, were sent to the coal mines of Silesia. 3/ A report dated 28 October, stated that from one section of Antwerp, 5,250 Jews had been deported to the East. 4/ During the same month, six hundred Jews were said to have been sent, by train, from Liege to an undisclosed destination; an additional 181 were sent to Malines to join a contingent leaving for Upper Silesia and the Ukraine. 5/ On 25 October 1942, the pro-Nazi paper Le Pays Reel announced with satisfaction that nearly fifty percent of the 52,000 Jews whom the Germans considered as "not-genuine" Belgian residents, had been deported. News from Belgium of 16 January 1943 estimated the number of deportees for the period of July to November 1942 at from 20,000 to 25,000.

In the beginning of 1943 a Zurich report stated that the German authorities in Belgium had decided to discontinue for a time the deportation of Jews to German-held territories in the East and instead were mobilizing them for forced labor on the coastal fortifications of Holland and Belgium. 6/ It is difficult to verify the accuracy of this information. In any case, if there was a lull it was only temporary and the forced removal of Jews from their homes continued. In February 1943, large numbers of Jews were seized at Hasselt, Genck, and Eysden and were sent to a concentration camp in Neckerspoel, near Malines, to await deportation. 7/ During the night of 20 April, 1,500 Jews were sent from Malines to Poland. On 29 April, Geneva sources reported that over 14,000 Jews from Belgium and Holland had arrived in the German-occupied Soviet province of Kherson to do forced labor. 8/ At the same time a transport carrying Belgian and French Jews left Malines for Germany via Tirlemont, St. Trond, Tongres, and Vise. 9/

1/ "Jewish Forced Labor," Jewish Affairs, March 1942.

2/ Hitlers Ten Years War Against the Jews (pub. Institute of Jewish Affairs), New York, 1943.

3/ The Contemporary Jewish Record, December 1942.

4/ The New York Times, 20 October 1942.

5/ The New York Times, 29 October 1942.

6/ Jewish Telegraphic Agency Daily News Bulletin, 27 January 1943.

7/ News from Belgium, 20 February 1943.

8/ Contemporary Jewish Record, June 1943.

9/ The Jewish Standard, London, 3 September 1943.

In June 1943, the Belgian Government-in-exile stated that the Germans had removed practically all the Jews from Belgium. However, in September of this year the Belgian Information Center revealed that before 5 September, "as a rule only Jewish foreigners or naturalized Belgian Jews have been deported" and that only thereafter was the entire Jewish population, including Belgian-born Jews, affected.

Not all the Jews earmarked for deportation have actually been removed. Word from Belgium indicates that hundreds of Jews are being sheltered by the Belgian population. In a futile effort to urge the Belgian population to surrender Jews in hiding, Col. Kooymans, chief of police for the provinces of Limburg and Brabant, announced that persons sheltering Jews "and who are now finding them a burden," can turn them over to the police without fear of punishment for having assisted fugitives. 1/

The data on the number of Jews actually deported from Belgium is contradictory. Belgian Government circles are inclined to believe that as a result of the new wave of deportations there are practically no Jews (foreigners as well as Belgian-born) left in the country. This is undoubtedly exaggerated. It may be assumed that of the 95,000 to 100,000 Jews living in Belgium in the autumn of 1940, some 45,000 to 50,000 have been deported.

1/ Jewish Telegraphic Agency Daily News Bulletin, 8 August 1943.

III. MOVEMENT OF POPULATION INTO BELGIUM

A. Foreign Workers and Prisoners of War

In an effort to free Belgian workers for Germany, all non-essential Belgian production, the loss of which would not undermine the economy of the country and affect the interests of German armament production, were closed down. Nevertheless, the German demand for manpower was so great that it resulted in a scarcity of labor in most of the vital branches of Belgian economy, and particularly in the coal mine industry.1/ Belgian newspapers even published appeals to workers who had dodged compulsory labor service, promising that they would not be punished if they volunteered for work in the Liege coal mines.2/ To alleviate the situation, foreign labor was introduced.

According to La Belgique Independante (London) of 11 February 1943, by the end of 1942 over seven thousand Russian prisoners had been brought to Belgium to work in the coal mines. German orders, forbidding any contact with foreign workers and prisoners of war, bear witness to their presence in Belgium. One such order spoke of "Russian workers and prisoners",3/ another of "prisoners of war and workers from the East."4/

A captain of the Belgian Army who escaped to England from his homeland in July 1943, estimated that the number of mine workers in Belgium was 30 percent higher than in peace time. According to the captain, who in civilian life had been an expert on Belgian production statistics, this increase was due to the importation of Russian, Norwegian, and other prisoners of war, by the Germans.5/ The number of workers employed in the Belgian coal mines before the war was about 120,000.6/ Thus the number of prisoners of war employed in Belgium amounts to some tens of thousands. In addition it has been reported that 37,000 Dutch laborers are working in France and Belgium.7/ In an air raid on Antwerp on 5 April 1943, it was reported that among the two thousand persons killed, seven hundred were Polish and Czech workers.8/

The total number of foreign laborers brought to Belgium is not less than thirty thousand, even basing this estimate on a very conservative view of the number of prisoners of war employed in mining and the assumption that only a minority of the above mentioned Netherlanders are working in Belgium.

1/ Transocean, 2 July 1943.

2/ According to News from Belgium, 18 September 1943, this appeal appeared in the Belgian newspapers several times.

3/ Volk en Staat, 18 November 1942.

4/ La Province de Namur, 19 January 1943.

5/ The New York Times, 18 July 1943.

6/ Annuaire Statistique de la Belgique, 1938. (Bassin du Sud - 102,397, Bassin du Nord - Campine - 18,762.)

7/ Radio Rennes, 20 August 1943.

8/ News Flashes from Czechoslovakia, 18 June 1943.

B. Germans

1. Officials and Workers. Belgium was one of the first occupied countries to receive an influx of civilian auxiliaries to the German Army. Of these the Gestapo force comprised a considerable number. The Christian Science Monitor of 9 February 1942, quoting a private Lisbon source, wrote that at that time there were in Belgium a minimum of eight thousand German police troops in civilian clothes. Employees and repairmen on the railroad lines constitute another important group. In view of the extensive Belgian railway network, the number of Germans employed must be a fairly large one, even if they are only engaged in the capacity of overseers for the German military authorities. A third group consists of the German OT engineers and foremen at work on the coastal defenses, the overseers who are in every Belgian mine as well as in the numerous other enterprises concerned with the German armament industry.

2. Refugees from Bombed Areas. As Belgium lies within the area most exposed to air raids, it cannot serve as a permanent refuge for Germans from bombed areas. Belgium is used, however, as an emergency shelter area because of its proximity to the heavily bombed German zones. Belgium has seldom been mentioned as destination for evacuees, but on 14 November 1942 News from Belgium reported that evacuees from Western Germany had gone to live in Brussels, thus creating a housing shortage there. On 3 April 1943 the same publication reported the construction of barracks at Eisenborn, in the Belgo-German frontier area, for evacuees from the Reich.

IV. INTERIOR MIGRATION

The war and in particular the German fear of an Allied invasion precipitated two inverse movements of population: the removal of people from the coastal areas and the bringing of workers to the coast.

As early as December 1941 there were rumors that people were fleeing Ostende because of the continuous RAF attacks. An Inbel report of 31 October 1941 stated that out of the city's 46,000 inhabitants, over 16,000 had left. 1/ This figure is obviously exaggerated for the period indicated, since at that time evacuation was voluntary and air raids had just begun.

In September 1942 the Associated Press reported that the Germans were evacuating Belgian families from Ostende on short notice. 2/ La Belgique Independante (London) of 14 January 1943 spoke of a single instance when ten thousand persons were evacuated from the coastal area.

As the Belgian coast is comparatively short, however, evacuation did not take on the same vast dimensions as in France and in the Netherlands. Along the entire coast, the evacuation affected mainly the more important communities. According to estimates for December 1939, 3/ Ostende is the only Belgian commune lying directly on the coast with a population of over fifty thousand. Bruges with a population of 51,827 is situated some eight miles from the coast. Other coastal towns such as Knocke, Blankenberge, and Heist have populations of from five to ten thousand. The population of Furnes, which lies within five miles of the coast, is 7,700 and that of Niewport in the same area, 5,426. In view of these figures, the total number of persons evacuated from the Belgian coast may be estimated at several tens of thousands.

On the other hand a considerable number of workers, both Belgian and foreign must have been brought into the coastal area to be employed on the construction of the Atlantic Wall.

Population figures for 1940 (970,642) and 1942 (971,317) show no actual change in the number of inhabitants of the province of West Flanders, which includes the entire coastal area. However, as these figures include all legal residents they cannot be used as a conclusive basis for the displacement of population. The following figures concerning the population of the four principal urban areas, although also recording legal residents, reflect the important shift of population to the cities.

The following table illustrates population changes in urban areas from 1939 to 1942.

1/ News from Belgium, 20 December 1941.

2/ The New York Times, 20 September 1942. According to The Population of Belgium, Census Library Project in cooperation with the Office of Foreign Relief, the population of Ostende was over 50,000 (December 31, 1939).

3/ The Population of Belgium, Census Library Project in cooperation with the Office of Foreign Relief.

	Population at the end of 1939 (a)	Population at the end of 1942 (b)	Increase
Brussels	907,108	925,557	2 percent
Antwerp	490,749	522,879	6 "
Liege	253,023	421,545	67 "
Ghent	213,292	253,899	19 "

(a). The Population of Belgium, Census Library Project in cooperation with the Office of Foreign Relief.
(b). Wirtschaft und Statistik, June 1943.

The total legal population of Belgium showed a decrease of 158,000 for the period between the end of 1939 and the end of 1942. It may be assumed that the Belgian workers in Germany considered as temporarily absent more or less equally affected the count of the population in all parts of the country. This is further proof that the growth of the legal population of the four big cities and particularly of the mining and metallurgical center of Liege is a result of a vast interior population movement.